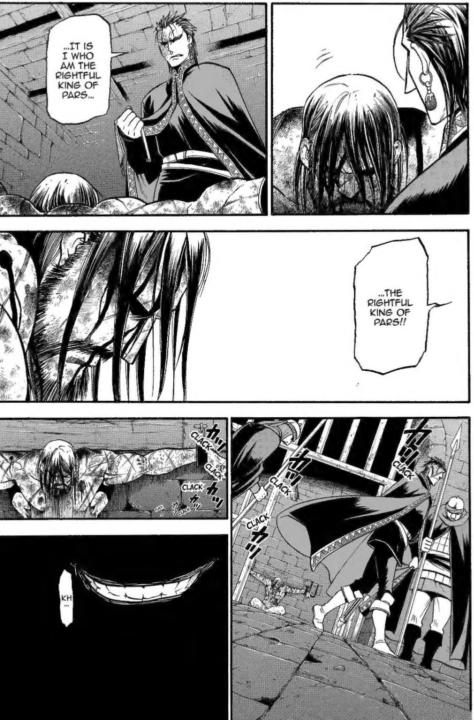
FA-
THER!
LOOK,
FATHER!
Silver Mask's was actually Hermes, the son of the prior king! He is the rightful heir to the throne of Pars!!
I
SHOT A
DEER!
KING
OSROES,
YOUR
MAJESTY!
HIS
HIGHNESS
HERMES
SHOT A
SPLENDID
DEER!

HIS HIGHNESS HERMES' SKILLS ARE TRULY ADMIRABLE!
HE TOOK DOWN A DEER WITH JUST ONE ARROW, AFTER ALL!
WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEE-ING HOW SKILLED HE BE-COMES IN THE FUTURE, AREN'T WE, YOUR MAJESTY!
WELL, I HAVE A GOOD HEIR.
THIS BOY IS APT TO BECOME THE GREATEST HERO OF PARS FIFTY YEARS FROM NOW.
RIGHT, DON'T YOU THINK SO?
AN-DRAGO-RAS.
... THAT'S RIGHT.
BIG BRO-THER.

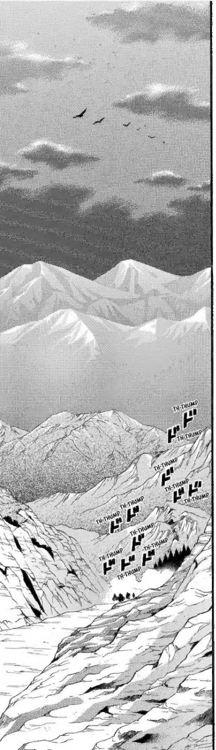
HER... MES ...?
CREAK
ARE YOU SUR-PRISED ?
OR HAVE YOU EVEN LOST THE WILL TO BE SUR-PRISED?

I WAS ABLE TO ESCAPE FROM THOSE FLAMES WHILE THE EVIL GODS PROTECTING A BASTARD LIKE YOU HAD THEIR EYES ELSEWHERE.
HOW UNFORTUNATE FOR YOU.
OH ANDRAGORAS, WHO MURDERED THE PRIOR KING, OSBORNE, THREW ME INTO THE FIRE AND UNJUSTLY TOOK THE THRONE...
WITHOUT LOWERING YOUR GAZE!!
THIS IS THE FACE THAT YOU BLINDED !!
TAKE A GOOD LOOK !!
GET A GOOD LOOK AT THE PROOF OF THE HEINOUS CRIME YOU COMMITTED SIXTEEN YEARS AGO!!

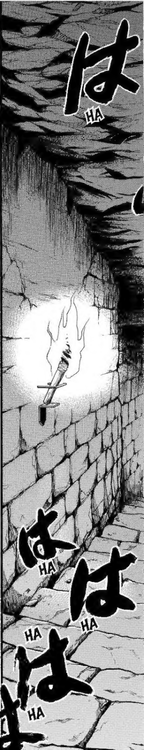
This story is fiction. It has no connection with the people, groups or events in real life.


...IT IS I WHO AM THE RIGHTFUL KING OF PARS...
...THE RIGHTFUL KING OF PARS!!
CLACK
CLACK
CLACK
CLACK
CLACK
CLACK
KH...

...FH HA-HA-HA-HA.
HAHA...
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
King Andragoras barks with laughter!! The Royal Capital of Ecbatana is shaken by conspiracy and speculation.
Chapter 20
The Lord the Fortress at Kashan



The Heroic Legend of Arslan



TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
HOW MANY LUSITANIAN PURSUERS ARE THERE?!
SHOULD BE AROUND 500 HORSEMEN!
THAT'S A BIT MANY!
TH-THUMP
YOUR HIGHNESS!
LORD DARYUN WILL LIKELY BE ARRIVING SHORTLY WITH SOLDIERS!
PLEASE HOLD ON!
ALRIGHT!

WE CANNOT RETAKE THE ROYAL CAPITAL WITHOUT GETTING REINFORCEMENTS.
THAT'S RIGHT, PAST THIS POINT ARE THE NĪMRŪZ MOUNTAINS, WHERE THE FORTRESS OF KASHAN IS LOCATED.
LET US ASK FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE RULER OF THE FORTRESS, LORD HODIR.
I'LL GO OUT AHEAD TO MEET HIM.
TH-THUMP TH-THUMP TH-THUMP TH-THUMP TH-THUMP
CHASE THEM, CHASE THEM!!
DAMMIT, IT'S BRIGHT!
DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF THEM ...
GEH
VWOOM
TH-THUDD

THWIP
THWIP
NH... SHOOT BACK AT THEM!!
CLATTERR
CLATTERR
CLATTERR
IDIOTS.
HOW COULD YOU HOPE TO BEAT AN EQUESTRIAN PEOPLE SUCH AS US PARSIANS AT HORSE-MANSHIP OR MOUNTED ARCHERY?
DON'T LET THEM GET THE EVENING SUN BEHIND THEM!
GET AROUND THEM!!
BWAANNHH
!!

TH-TH-THUMP
TH-TH-THUMP
?!

GH...
PULL BACK, PULL BACK!!
NEEIGGHHH
EAST OF THE ROYAL CAPITAL OF ECBATANA
THE FORTRESS OF KASHAN
Darband Inland Sea
Daylam
Kasharn Fortress
大陸公路
Keep of Saint Emmanuel
Peshawar Citadel
Pars
Ecbatana
Gilan
Sindhura

HODIR!
YOUR HIGHNESS! OH, ARSLAN, YOUR HIGHNESS!
THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE SAFE!

WE'LL BE UN- DER YOUR
SINCE I HEARD ABOUT THE DEFEAT AT ATROPATENE, I'VE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY OF YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE AND HIS MAJESTY THE KING!
BUT WITH JUST MY POWER ALONE I HAD NO WAY TO TAKE OUR REVENGE BY CHALLENGING THE HUGE ARMY OF LUSITANIA...
...AND HAVE JUST BEEN ACHING WITH WORRY...
AND JUST AS I WAS BEING FRUSTRATED AT MY OWN POWER- LESSNESS, LORD DARYUN APPEARS HERE AT MY CASTLE TODAY!
YOU'VE GIVEN ME A CHANCE TO SHOW MY LOYALTY TO YOUR HIGHNESS!
HE HAS A GREAT NUMBER OF GHOLAM...

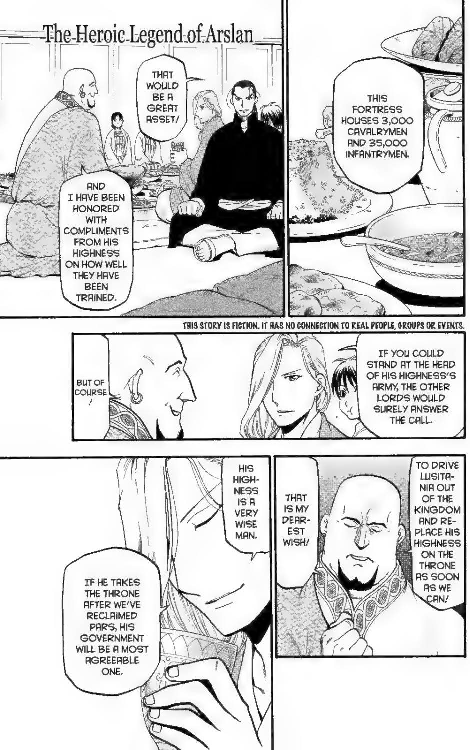
YOUR HIGH-NESS?
OH.
YES, WE REALLY GOT LUCKY TODAY.
YOUR SOLDIERS ARE WELL TRAINED.
WHAT A WASTE OF KIND WORDS!
IF YOU SO WISH, YOUR HIGHNESS, THEN BY ALL MEANS, TAKE THEM FOR YOUR GUARD!
ははは HA HA HA
LADY FARAN-GIS.
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT MAN?
HE'S A MAN OF MANY WORDS.
LIKE HE'S COATED HIS TONGUE WITH OIL.
AND IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE OIL OF VERY GOOD QUALITY, EITHER.
ウム HMF
TALKATIVE MEN INSTEAD END UP EXPOSING THEIR OWN DISLOYALTIES, AFTER ALL!
LIKE SOME-ONE ELSE.

WELL ANYWAY, WHETHER HE'S GOOD OR EVIL, IT DOESN'T CHANGE THE TASTE OF *NABEED.*

IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, PLEASE TELL ME.
OH!
THESE ARE GOOD SPIRITS!
LADY FARANGIS, HOW ABOUT A SIP...?
YES, IT IS GOOD WINE.
IT GOES DOWN SMOOTHLY.
THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN EAT ALL THIS.
SIR NARSUS, IT'S FULL OF FOODS I'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN BEFORE!
IT'S A POMEGRANATE SHERBET WITH ALMONDS AND MOLASSES

YOUR HIGH-NESS.
I DON'T HAVE A SON BUT I DO HAVE A DAUGHTER.
ぬっ
POKE
AH... IS THAT RIGHT?
SHE'S THIR-TEEN.
AND SHE'S QUITE THE BEAUTY.
WELL, I MIGHT BE CALLED A DOTING FATHER, BUT...
IF SHE COULD ONLY BE AT YOUR SIDE, YOUR HIGHNESS, THEN I'M SURE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO GREATER HAPPINESS FOR MY DAUGHTER EITHER.
ふがぐっ
GABWAHH
ゴホゲホ
HACK
HACK
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, ALL OF THE SUD-DEN...?
YOUR HIGH-NESS IS FOUR-TEEN AS WELL.
IT MIGHT BE ABOUT TIME FOR YOU TO CONSIDER THINGS LIKE PRINCESSES AND SUCH...

IF YOU SHOULD WISH IT THEN I SHALL CALL MY DAUGHTER HERE AT ONCE.
ゴホ
COUGH
THIS IS NO TIME FOR THINGS LIKE THAT, WITH THE C... COUNTRY IN CHAOS!
SO THEN ONCE THINGS CALM DOWN...
COUGHH
I'M GOING TO GET A BIT OF AIR!
I'LL GO WITH HIM.
THIS SEEMS INTER-ESTING, AFTER ALL.
OH, WHAT A SUR-PRISE...
I'VE NEVER HEARD IT COME UP ABOUT YOU, YOUR HIGH-NESS.
GRINN
WOMEN ARE WON-DERFUL THINGS.
THEY GIVE YOU ABUN-DANCE IN LIFE.
LIKE I SAID! THIS IS NO TIME TO THINK ABOUT SUCH THINGS!!
He absolutely is planning something! A premonition of a night of commotion and tempest!!



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HE OFTEN ASKS ME WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A GOOD RULER.
MY, HOW WONDER-FUL!
DOES HIS HIGHNESS HAVE A CLEAR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF HIS KINGDOM?
YES.
HE APPEARS TO HAVE HIS DOUBTS ABOUT THE SLAVE SYSTEM.
I SEE...
...COME TO THINK OF IT, YOU DID FREE THE GHOLAMS BACK WHEN YOU WERE THE LORD OF DAYLAM, DID YOU NOT?
THAT WAS IN THE PAST.

The Heroic Legend of Arslan

MANGA: HIROMU ARAKAWA, ORIGINAL
SCRIPT: YOSHIKI TANAKA,
(PUBLISHED BY KODANSHA KAPPA NOVELS)

CHAPTER 22: HODIR'S PLOT

AND SO, AS YOU CAN SEE.
A LIFE WITHOUT WOMEN IS LIKE A LIFE IN A WORLD OF DARKNESS, WITH NO STARS IN THE SKY, AND NO FLOWERS IN THE LAND.
SQUEE
UM, NO, I JUST DON'T THINK NOW IS THE TIME TO WORRY ABOUT TAKING A QUEEN...
THIS IS EXACTLY THE TIME! YOU NEED A SOOTHING INFLUENCE IN YOUR LIFE, YOUR HIGHNESS!!
A MAN OF YOUR STATURE COULD HAVE ANYONE OF YOUR CHOOSING!!
DON'T TELL ME YOU ALREADY HAVE YOUR HEART SET ON SOMEONE?!
YOU LITTLE RASCAL, YOU!!
SOMEBODY HELP ME!!
MAY WE BORROW ONE OF THESE SOLDIERS YOU'RE SO PROUD OF?
KA-CRACK
NO, I'LL HANDLE THIS. BAREHANDED.

NOW, NOW. I'VE HAD ROOMS PREPARED FOR ALL OF YOU. PLEASE, GET SOME REST.
I WON'T BE NEEDING A ROOM.
DARYUN?
I WOULD LIKE TO BORROW A BLANKET.
I WILL BE TAKING MY REST OUTSIDE HIS HIGHNESS'S CHAMBER DOOR.
PERISH THE THOUGHT!
YOU MUST BE EXHAUSTED FROM YOUR LONG JOURNEY AND BATTLES. ...I COULD NEVER LET YOU SLEEP IN THE HALLWAY!!
BUT MY DUTY IS TO PROTECT HIS HIGHNESS...
I WON'T HAVE IT!!
YOUR HIGHNESS, THIS WAY, PLEASE!
HAVE NO FEAR! I WILL STATION STRONG WARRIORS OUTSIDE YOUR CHAMBER!

PLEASE, LORD DARYUN. MAKE YOURSELF COMFORT-ABLE.
SQUISH
FOUR MEN IN ONE ROOM!!
THIS IS DIS-GUST-ING!!
IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE I'VE SLEPT IN A REAL BED.

AND YOU WILL BE SLEEPING HERE, PRINCE ARSLAN.
IT'S HUGE...
THANK YOU, HODIR.
I APPRECIATE YOUR HOSPITALITY.
YOUR HIGHNESS.
MAY I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU?
IT WOULD APPEAR THAT WHAT HODIR WANTS IS TO MARRY HIS DAUGHTER TO THE NEW KING AND GAIN THE POWER THAT COMES WITH BEING RELATED TO THE QUEEN.
NOW THAT WE KNOW HIS TRUE MOTIVES, WE CAN'T LEAVE HIM TO HIS OWN DEVICES.
HIS MILITARY FORCE IS QUITE APPEALING.
IF POSSIBLE, I'D PREFER NOT TO TURN HIM AGAINST US.

YAWN...
ふぁ...
...BUT IF HE INTENDS TO TURN US AGAINST HIM, THEN THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT.
ELAM.
YES, SIR.
OOF
EX-CUSE ME.

THMP
!
SIR NARSUS, I FOUND THIS!
I THOUGHT AS MUCH.
SNIFF
WHAT IS IT?
A MIXTURE OF THE SAP SQUEEZED FROM RESEN STALK, AROMATIC OIL, AND JUICED POPPY LEAF.
IT RELEASES A COLORLESS, ODORLESS SMOKE THAT PUTS TO SLEEP ANYONE WHO INHALES IT.
A SLEEPING DRUG?!

IT WOULD SEEM THERE IS NO NEED FOR RE-STRAINT.
KNOCK KNOCK
GIEVE!

LEAVE EVERY-THING TO ME.
NOW WE WAIT.

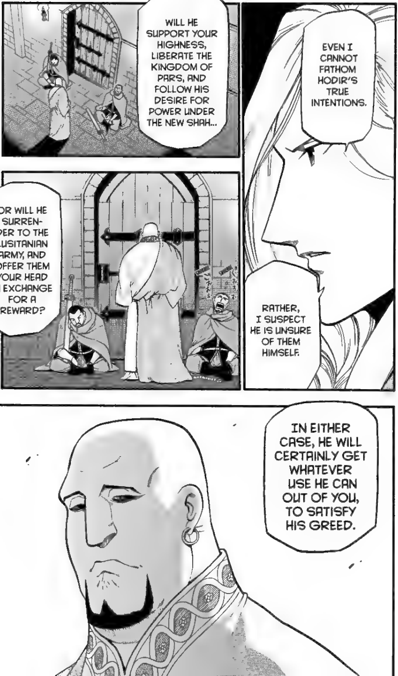
WHAT IS THIS?
THE BOOK OF YALDA-BOATH.
IT WAS GIVEN TO ME BY A LUSITANIAN I KNOW, BUT I CAN'T READ LUSITANIAN.
GET RID OF IT! IT'S GAR-BAGE.
HA HA... THAT'S WHAT ELAM TOLD ME.
"YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO HOLDS THINGS DEAR."

SO HE'S TRYING TO UNDERSTAND WHATEVER HE CAN ABOUT LUSITANIA. HENCE THEIR SCRIPTURES...
UH-HUH. I SEE.
NARSUS SAID THAT ONLY A BARBARIAN WOULD FAIL TO UNDERSTAND THAT CONCEPT.
YOU'VE TRAVELED THE WORLD, RIGHT, GIEVE?
CAN YOU READ LUSITANIAN?
I AM FAR FROM AS KNOWLEDGEABLE AS LORD NARSUS, BUT I AM SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR WITH THEIR LANGUAGE.
IF YOU'LL BE SATISFIED WITH WHAT LITTLE I CAN READ.
HE'S AN ODD PRINCE...

"THE SERVANTS OF OUR HOLY GOD..."
UHH... HOLY...
"MUST NOT GIVE IN TO THE TEMPTATION THAT IS WOMAN."
OR SO IT SEEMS TO SAY HERE.
IT IS AN EVIL BOOK.
WE MUST GET RID OF IT!
NO, STOP!
CLUNK
CREAK...

HODIE GAVE ME TWO CONDITIONS.

THE FIRST IS TO MAKE HIS DAUGHTER MY FUTURE QUEEN.
THE SECOND IS TO REFRAIN FROM ANY REVOLUTIONARY MEASURE THAT WOULD DE-STROY PARSIAN TRADITIONS, LIKE FREEING THE GHOLAMS.
I DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING UNTIL AFTER I'VE GATHERED AN ARMY, FOUGHT LUSITANIA, TAKEN BACK THE ROYAL CAPITAL, AND SAVED MY MOTHER AND FATHER...
HODIR IS TAKING EVERY-THING MUCH TOO FAST.
WHAT DID YOU TELL HIM, YOUR HIGH-NESS?
I TOLD HIM I COULDN'T ANSWER RIGHT AWAY.
AND THAT I'D GIVE HIM MY DECISION TOMOR-ROW.
THAT WILL DO.
HONESTLY, WHAT IS HE THINK-ING?
I'VE NEVER EVEN MET HIS DAUGH-TER.


EVEN I CANNOT FATHOM HODIR'S TRUE INTENTIONS.
WILL HE SUPPORT YOUR HIGHNESS, LIBERATE THE KINGDOM OF PARS, AND FOLLOW HIS DESIRE FOR POWER UNDER THE NEW SHAH...
OR WILL HE SURRENDER TO THE LUSITANIAN ARMY, AND OFFER THEM YOUR HEAD IN EXCHANGE FOR A REWARD?
RATHER, I SUSPECT HE IS UNSURE OF THEM HIMSELF.
IN EITHER CASE, HE WILL CERTAINLY GET WHATEVER USE HE CAN OUT OF YOU, TO SATISFY HIS GREED.

THAT WOULD MEAN *WE* ARE IN HIS WAY.
YOUR HIGHNESS, HODIR WILL LIKELY MAKE HIS MOVE BEFORE THE NIGHT IS OUT.
I KNOW YOU MUST BE TIRED, BUT PLEASE, MAKE PREPARATIONS TO LEAVE AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE.
I UNDERSTAND.
GIEVE, WILL YOU TAKE HIS HIGHNESS TO HIS CHAMBER?
YES, OF COURSE.
AND ELAM.
DON'T PUT ANY IDEAS INTO HIS HIGHNESS'S HEAD!
YES, SIR.
...YES, SIR!
I'M ON MY WAY!

THE DJINN ARE REST- LESS.

CREAK
キッ
THE DJINN ARE WHISPERING THAT I SHOULD STICK MY FOOT OUT THE WINDOW.
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT, LADY FARANGIS!
ぎ GH
ぎ GH
ぎ GH
ぎ GH
ぎ GH
NOTE: THIS SEEMS TO BE WHAT GIEVE CALLS NARSUS.
WHAT IS IT?
A MES- SAGE
THEN YOU COULD HAVE COME IN THROUGH THE DOOR

HODIR SHOWS HIS TRUE COLORS! A NIGHT BATTLE INSIDE AN ENEMY STRONGHOLD, AN UNAVOIDABLE CRISIS!!

TO BE CONTINUED!

THE HEROIC LEGEND OF ARSLAN
HIGH- NESS.
ARSLAN, YOUR HIGH- NESS.
KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK
PLEASE PARDON THE DISTUR- BANCE AT THIS LATE HOUR.
MY SIN- CEREST APOL- OGIES FOR WAKING YOU.
KNOCK
KNOCK

This story is fiction It has no connection to real people, groups or events

TO HEREAFTER ELIMINATE DARYUN, NARSUS, AND THE OTHERS AT YOUR HIGHNESS'S SIDE WHO WOULD BRING YOU HARM.
MAY I HAVE YOUR HIGHNESS'S BLESSING IN THIS MATTER?
THEY HAVE SERVED ME WELL.
WHY WOULD YOU SEE IT FIT TO DO AWAY WITH THEM?
SOONER OR LATER THEY WILL PROVE TO BE DISLOYAL. IT IS CLEAR THAT THEY WILL HARM YOUR HIGHNESS AND THE KINGDOM SOMEDAY.
WHAT NON-SENSE!
I ACT ONLY IN YOUR HIGHNESS'S BEST INTERESTS!
WHY DO YOU THINK IT IS THAT NARSUS, WHILE BLESSED WITH INGENUITY, INCURRED KING ANDRAGORAS'S DISPLEASURE?

HIS PROPOSALS TO ABOLISH THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY, TO CONFISCATE THE TEMPLES' WEALTH, TO APPLY THE SAME LAWS EQUALLY TO NOBLES AND ĀZĀT...
IT WAS BECAUSE HE ADVOCATED SUCH RADICAL IDEAS, ONES THAT WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE VERY FOUNDATION OF PARS!
EVEN WERE WE TO DRIVE OUT THE LUSITANIAN ARMY, THE KINGDOM WOULD BE BETTER OFF IN RUINS THAN IT WOULD BE UNDER THE GOVERNANCE OF EXTREMISTS LIKE THAT DAMN NARSUS!!
I SUSPECT THAT MAN, NOT KNOWING HIS PLACE, DEMANDED THAT YOUR HIGHNESS APPOINT HIM TO A HIGH RANK IN COURT, DID HE NOT?!
NARSUS DEMANDED NOTHING OF ME.
IT WAS OF MY OWN ACCORD THAT I OFFERED HIM THE HUMBLEST OF POSITIONS.
HODIR.
IF YOU DESIRE THE POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER, THEN AFTER I SUCCEED TO THE THRONE, I WILL MAKE YOU MY PRIME MINISTER.
WILL YOU NOT COOPERATE WITH DARYUN, NARSUS, AND THE OTHERS, IN AIDING ME?
I CANNOT FATHOM IT!! AS NARSUS'S CLOSE FRIEND, DARYUN SURELY SHARES HIS RADICAL POLITICAL IDEAS!!
AND THE OTHER TWO, FARANGIS AND GIEVE, CANNOT BE TRUSTED!! WHO KNOWS WHAT THEY ARE PLOTTING!!

UNDER KING ANDRAGORAS, THEY HAD NO HOPE OF ADVANCING THEIR POSITIONS. THOSE WRETCHES ARE ONLY USING YOUR HIGHNESS TO FURTHER THEIR OWN ENDS!!
I BEG OF YOU, ENTRUST YOUR SAFETY TO I, HODIR, AND...
IF I DID AS YOU ADVISE, IT WOULD MEAN I WOULD BE ABANDONING NARSUS, DARYUN, AND THE OTHERS, YES?
INDEED, IT WOULD BE SO!
I SIMPLY CAN'T COM-PREHEND YOUR WAY OF THINKING.
IF I WERE TO DISCARD DARYUN AND NARSUS, AND CHOOSE YOU, INSTEAD...
...HOW CAN YOU GUARAN-TEE THERE SHALL NOT COME A DAY WHEN I WILL BE FORCED TO DISCARD YOU, IN TURN?!

YOU SLANDER NARSUS'S NAME!
YET WHEN NARSUS OFFERED ME SHELTER FOR A NIGHT, HE DID NOT ACCOST ME WITH ANY FOUL TRICKS!

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY
ONE DAY, I SHALL REPAY YOU FOR TONIGHT'S MEAL.
HOWEVER, I NO LONGER WISH TO MAKE YOU AN ALLY!
TAD
Y-YOUR HIGHNESS, PLEASE WAIT!
TAD
DARYUN!
NARSUS!
GIEVE!
FARANGIS!
ELAM! ROUSE YOURSELVES!
WE LEAVE THIS FORTRESS AT ONCE!!
TAD
WE HAVE BEEN AWAITING YOUR COMMAND

Manga: Hiromu Arakawa x Original Script: Yoshiki Tanaka
(published by Kobunsha Kappa Novels)

THE HEROIC LEGEND OF ARSLAN

CHAPTER 22: FOR ONE'S LORD

Armor Design Assistance: Daisuke Nitsuma

PLEASE WAIT, YOUR HIGHNESS!
ALLOW ME TO SPEAK!
THESE SO-CALLED COMPANIONS FEIGN LOYALTY TO LURE YOUR HIGHNESS DOWN A PATH OF WICKEDNESS!!
YOU'RE DESCRIBING YOURSELF, HODIR.
WOULD YOU STOP THROWING A TANTRUM BECAUSE YOU FAILED TO TURN HIS HIGHNESS INTO YOUR PUPPET?
THEY ARE UNFORGIVABLY EVIL CREATURES!!
...
IT WAS MY UNWORTHINESS THAT INVITED SUCH NEEDLESS SUSPICION UPON ME...

I WILL NOT TRY TO STALL YOU HERE.
AT THE VERY LEAST, YOUR HIGHNESS, PLEASE ALLOW MY MEN TO LEAD YOUR NOBLE STEED BY THE REINS.
SWOOP
WHOOSH
SPACK
SHLKK
A...
SPURT
AAAR-RGH

APPROACHING HIS HIGHNESS THE CROWN PRINCE WITH HIDDEN DAGGERS? WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?
OR IS THAT CONSID-ERED TO BE GOOD FORM IN THE PRESENCE OF ROYALTY, IN THESE PARTS?
CL-CLANG
CLACK KRK

AH! COME TO A
AH! COME TO A
AH WOOSH
STAND DOWN AND LET US GO. FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, MOOR.

HE CAN'T BE DEFEATED ON FAIR TERMS!!
ARCHERS!!!
FWACK
FWACK
WHA?!
?!
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? SHOOT THEM!!
B-BUT OUR...
I CUT THE STRING OF EVERY BOW IN THE GUARDHOUSE, JUST AS YOU ASKED!
WELL DONE, ELAM.

N-NAAAR-SUUUSS!!!
Y... Y-Y-Y-Y... YOU SCHEMING FOX!!!
OH?
WHY, I COULD NEVER HOPE TO COMPARE TO *YOU.*
NOW THEN, OH LORD OF KASHAN...
FEW THEY MAY BE, BUT WE HAVE BOWS, AND ARCHERS TO SHOOT THEM.
YOU ARE A WISE MAN.
I BELIEVE YOU WILL FIND THE NOTION OF OPENING THE GATE AND SENDING US ON OUR WAY QUITE AGREE-ABLE...

PEERS
FSST
?!
!

CAPTURE THE CROWN PRINCE!!
OUR LIEGE NEEDS OUR HELP!!
GO!! THE PRINCE IS YOUR MARK!!
RAAAA
USE THE DARKNESS TO OVERRUN THEM!!
TH-
THWACK

ARGH
...
WHAM
ドカッ
EE...
GRRSH
ズ
TH-THUMP
ドドッ
EEEEP!!!
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
ドドドドッ
THNK
ゴッ
WHUMP
ドデェ
SKTHMP
ズシ…
SKTHMP
ズシ…
SKTHMP
ズシ…

YOUR GAUDY ARMOR MAKES YOU STICK OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB EVEN IN THIS DARKNESS, HODIR.
SKTHMP
ズシ
SKTHMP
ズシ
SKTHMP
ズシ
HEE
HEE
HFF
HFF
HEE
NRRYAA!!
CRING
キン!

NOT GOING TO BEG FOR YOUR LIFE EVEN AT THIS POINT? BEFITTING FOR AN HONORABLE NOBLE, I SUPPOSE.
Hrraa!!
BUT YOU HAVE BETRAYED EVERYTHING THAT SHALL NOT BE BETRAYED.
HWOO
TW
NG
SPA-CRANG

YOUR LORD IS DEAD !!
Will you fight on for a dead man?!

OPEN THE GATE.
... YES, SIR ...
YOUR HIGHNESS, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
!

AS WE'VE COME THIS FAR...
LET'S FREE HODIR'S *GHOLAMS.*
I JUST ASKED THIS MAN TO SHOW ME TO THE SLAVE HUTS.

WHAK
WHAK
BRAK
CREAK
You're free men now!

OUR MASTER...
DOES MASTER HODIR KNOW OF THIS?
HODIR IS DEAD.
THUS, YOU HAVE GAINED YOUR FREEDOM.
MASTER IS DEAD?!
DID YOU PEOPLE KILL OUR MASTER ?!
WE DID.
NO LONGER ARE YOU BOUND BY...
YOU MONSTROUS BASTARDS !!!

WH...
We must avenge our master!!
Don't let them escape!!
He believed he was doing the right thing... His message of freedom unheeded, harsh reality bares its fangs at Arslan!!
TO BE CONTINUED!

YOU...
THE HEROIC LEGEND OF ARSLAN
SHR-THNK
FAR FROM REJOICING OVER THEIR NEWFOUND FREEDOM, HODIR'S GHOLAMS TAKE UP ARMS!!
... BAS-TARD !!
THIS STORY IS FICTION. IT HAS NO CONNECTION TO REAL PEOPLE, GROUPS OR EVENTS.
HOLD! MY FRIENDS! NO LONGER DOES HODIR KEEP YOU BOUND TO THIS PLACE!

YOU KILLED HIM, YOU LITTLE SHIT!!
YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS!!
YOU STOLE OUR MASTER FROM US!!
DAMN MA-RAUDER!!!
TAKE TH...
EH?
THMP
TH-THMP
SKTT
TH-THMP

TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
FORGIVE ME, YOUR HIGHNESS.
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
LORD DAR-YUN!
TH-THUMP
I HAVE HIM! WE'LL RIDE STR-AIGHT OUT OF THE GATE!
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP

Manga Hiromu Arakawa x
Original Script: Yoshiki Tanaka
(published by Kobunsha Kappa Novels)

THE HEROIC LEGEND OF ARSLAN

CHAPTER 23:THE SITE OF JUSTICE

HODIR WAS A BENEVOLENT MASTER TO HIS GHOLAMS.
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THOSE GHOLAMS, YOUR HIGHNESS AND WE IN YOUR PARTY ARE THE EVIL ENEMIES OF THEIR BELOVED MASTER.
WHY DID YOU NOT FORE-WARN ME?
YOU KNEW THIS MIGHT HAPPEN.
CLOP
I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT A WARNING WOULD HAVE CONVINCED YOUR HIGHNESS.
THERE ARE THINGS IN THIS WORLD THAT CAN ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD THROUGH EX-PERIENCE. WITH THAT IN MIND, I CHOSE NOT TO STOP YOU.

DID YOU, TOO, LEARN THIS LESSON THE HARD WAY?
NARSUS?
...I BELIEVE YOU HAVE HEARD THE STORY OF HOW, FIVE YEARS AGO, AFTER I INHERITED MY FATHER'S POSITION AS THE LORD OF DAYLAM, I FREED ALL OF OUR GHOLAMS.
SHORTLY THEREAFTER, I RESIDED FOR A TIME IN THE ROYAL CAPITAL, TO TAKE PART IN THE CAMPAIGN TO REPEL THE THREE-KINGDOM ALLIANCE OF TŪRĀN, SINDHURA, AND TŪRK.
AT THE END OF THE CONFLICT, I DEPARTED FOR MY OWN LANDS FOR A BRIEF RESPITE.
UPON MY RETURN, I FOUND NEARLY ALL OF THE GHOLAMS I HAD RELEASED SLAVING AWAY. THEY HAD COME DRIFTING BACK.
THEY LACKED THE SKILLS AND DIRECTION NECESSARY TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY AS AZĀT.
I GAVE EACH OF YOU THE FUNDS TO COVER ONE YEAR'S WORTH OF EXPENSES WHEN I RELEASED YOU!
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MONEY?
M'LORD...

WE USED 'AT ALL UP 'FORE WE KNEW IT.
PLEASE, MASTER. LET US WORK HERE AGAIN.
WHAT WAS MORE, THEY WERE UNACCUS-TOMED TO PLANNING HOW TO SPEND THEIR MONEY.
OUR LAST MASTER WAS MUCH KINDER...
HE NEVER WOULD HAVE DRIVEN US FROM HOME, LIKE OUR NEW MASTER!
TO BE A SLAVE UNDER A MAGNAN-IMOUS MASTER...
NO LIFE IS MORE COM-FORTABLE THAN THIS.
THERE IS NO NEED TO EVER THINK FOR YOURSELF; SHELTER AND FOOD IS PROVIDED SO LONG AS ONE MERELY FOLLOWS ORDERS.
FIVE YEARS AGO, I COULD NOT FATHOM IT.

BUT DID YOU NOT DO WHAT WAS JUST, TRUE TO YOUR BELIEFS?
IS THAT NOT SO?
PERHAPS JUSTICE IS NOT THE SUN, YOUR HIGHNESS, BUT MUCH LIKE THE STARS.
COUNTLESS STARS ARE SPREAD ACROSS THE SKY, EACH OF THEIR LIGHTS TRYING TO OUTSHINE ONE ANOTHER.
IT IS SOMETHING DARYUN'S UNCLE OFTEN TOLD US.
"YOU YOUNG ONES THINK THAT ONLY YOU CAN BE IN THE RIGHT," HE WOULD SAY.

THEN, NARSUS ...
DO HUMAN BEINGS NOT TRULY REQUIRE FREEDOM?
NOT SO.
BY NATURE, WE HUMANS DESIRE FREEDOM.
GHOLAMS ONLY BEGIN TO WISH FOR THE COMFORT OF SHACKLES OVER FREEDOM BECAUSE OF A BROKEN SOCIAL SYSTEM—
...NEVER MIND THAT, YOUR HIGHNESS.
DO NOT BE SWAYED BY MY RAMBLING.
YOUR HIGHNESS MEANS TO WALK A MORALLY UPRIGHT PATH.
PLEASE, CONTINUE DOWN THAT ROAD.

ELAM.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
AH.
I'M USING MY TURN ON NIGHTWATCH TO PREPARE FOR BREAK-FAST.
I'LL MAKE SURE WE CAN EAT BREAKFAST QUICKLY SO THAT WE CAN DEPART WITHOUT DELAY. SO PLEASE REST, YOUR HIGHNE ...
HUP!
YOUR HIGH-NESS ?!

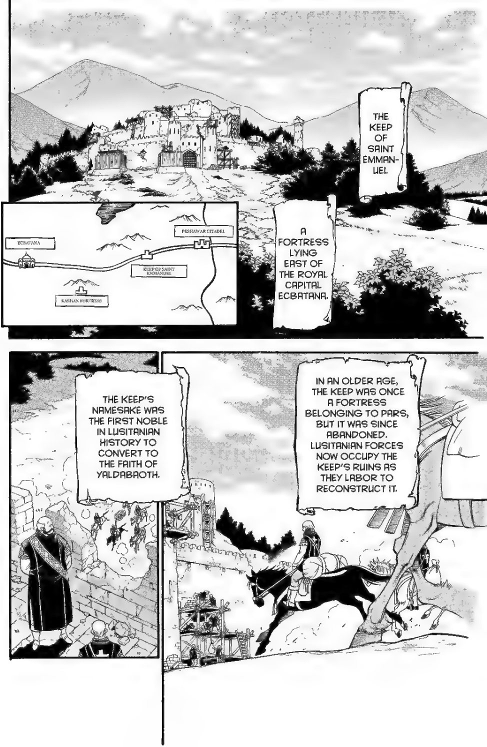
COLD, ISN'T IT?
YES. WINTER IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER.
WHENEVER I WATCH YOU COOK, I'M IMPRESSED BY YOUR KNACK FOR IT.
I'VE DONE A LOT OF COOKING.
I LEARNED TO MAKE FOOD WHEN WE *GHOLAMS* ALTERNATED COOKING DUTIES.
SO THAT CAUSED YOU TO IMPROVE, UNTIL YOU WERE TASKED WITH PREPARING NARSUS'S MEALS?
WHEN WE LIVED IN THE SLAVE HUTS, SIR NARSUS WOULD VISIT UNEXPECTEDLY AT MEALTIMES...
HM?
WELL, THIS LOOKS TASTY.
SIR NARSUS!

LET ME TRY ONE.
WE'VE JUST RE-TURNED FROM HUNTING, AND I'M QUITE FAM-ISHED.
GRRMBL
BUT SIR!! SUCH CRUDE FOOD IS HARDLY BEFITTING A MAN OF YOUR STATURE...
ひょい
SNATCH
AH!
!
DELI-CIOUS!
WHO MADE THIS?
OUR SON...
ELAM?
YOU POSSESS A GREAT SKILL!
MAY I HAVE ANOTHER?

OUR SON'S NAME ...
YOUR LORDSHIP WOULD REMEMBER A LOWLY *GHOLAM'S* NAME...?
THAT GOES WITH-OUT SAY-ING.
JUST ONE MORE
YOU ARE ALL HUMAN BEINGS, EACH WITH YOUR OWN NAME, ARE YOU NOT?
OH, DRAT! I DIDN'T INTEND TO EAT SO MUCH!
HAVE I GONE AND PILFERED YOUR MEAL?
I KNOW! WE FELLED A DUCK ON OUR HUNT!
WE'LL MAKE IT A TRADE, ELAM!
HUH?! WOW!! MEAT?!
I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE WASTING OUR GAME ON *GHOLAMS!*
NOW, NOW. THE BOY'S COOKING WAS ENTIRELY WORTH IT

LORD NARSUS'S PRAISE FILLED ME WITH SUCH PRIDE. IT DROVE ME TO HONE MY SKILLS.
THANKS TO THAT, EVEN AFTER HE MADE ME *AZĀT*, I'VE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE MY OWN WAY BY DOING WHAT I WANT TO DO.
CRACKLE
SO LONG AS THEY HAVE A CRAFT, GHOLAMS CAN MAKE THEIR OWN WAY AFTER THEY ARE FREED...?
YOU'RE TRULY CONSIDERING FREEING EVERY GHOLAM IN THE KINGDOM?
SHOULD I NOT?

WELL, WELL ...
HE HASN'T GIVEN UP EVEN THOUGH THINGS BLEW UP IN HIS FACE, HUH?
TELL ME MORE, ELAM.
HEARING YOUR STORY GIVES ME HOPE.
THEY NEED SKILLS, AND A SOCIAL SYSTEM THAT WILL SUSTAIN THEIR LIVELIHOODS... WHAT DO YOU THINK I SHOULD DO?
IF YOU HAVE ANY THOUGHTS ON THIS, DO TELL ME!
I AM NOT LEARNED LIKE SIR NARSUS, YOUR HIGHNESS!
GO BACK TO SLEEP, YOUR HIGHNESS, PLEASE!
I'LL GIVE YOU A MIDNIGHT SNACK!!


THE KEEP OF SAINT EMMANUEL
A FORTRESS LYING EAST OF THE ROYAL CAPITAL ECBATANA.
ECBATANA
PESHAWAR CITADEL
KEEP OF SAINT EMMANUEL
KASHAN FORTRESS
IN AN OLDER AGE, THE KEEP WAS ONCE A FORTRESS BELONGING TO PARS, BUT IT WAS SINCE ABANDONED. LUSITANIAN FORCES NOW OCCUPY THE KEEP'S RUINS AS THEY LABOR TO RECONSTRUCT IT.
THE KEEP'S NAMESAKE WAS THE FIRST NOBLE IN LUSITANIAN HISTORY TO CONVERT TO THE FAITH OF YALDABAOTH.

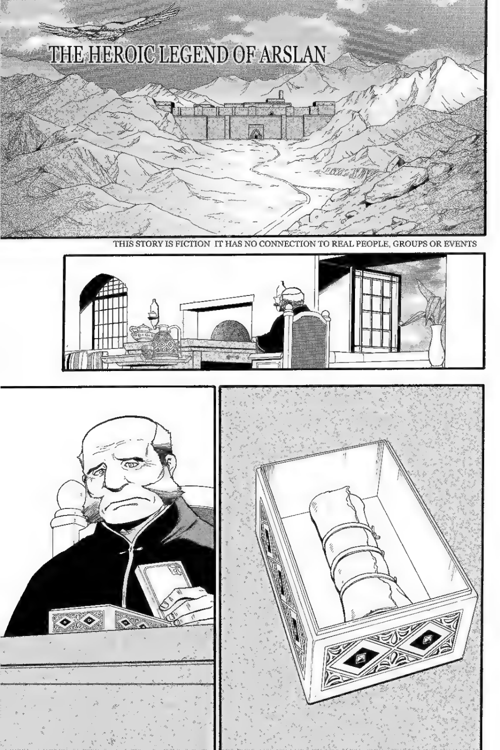
ITS PRESENT LORD IS COUNT BARCACION.
OHH/ I SEE YOU'VE RETURNED SAFELY...
...ÉTOILE.
I'M BACK, COUNT BARCARCION.
ANY NEWS, ÉTOILE?
HOW WAS YOUR EXPEDITION TO ECBATANA?
DID YOU FIND THE FRIENDS YOU WERE SEARCHING FOR?

...I WAS TOO LATE.
SO YOU WERE ...
I'M SORRY, MY BOY...
YOU MUST BE EXHAUSTED.
GO HAVE A LONG REST.
I DO NOT NEED REST!
NOT WHEN THE REMNANTS OF THE PARSIAN ARMY ARE RALLYING AS WE SPEAK!
YOUR GRANDFATHER LEFT YOU IN MY CARE.
I COULD NEVER SEND YOU INTO DANGEROUS BATTLEFIELDS.
A TRUE KNIGHT KNOWS NO FEAR!
ALTHOUGH I'M STILL A SQUIRE!

THREE YEARS AGO, WHEN YOU WERE CAPTURED BY PARSIAN FORCES, YOUR GRANDFATHER AND I WERE BESIDE OURSELVES WITH WORRY!
TRY TO BE LESS RASH!
BUT...
MOREOVER, YOUR TRUE: WE DO NOT KNOW WHEN THE REMAINDER OF THE PARSIAN ARMY MIGHT ATTACK US!
IN FACT, IT SEEMS THAT NOT SO FAR FROM HERE, ON THE EASTERN BORDER, A MIGHTY PARSIAN FORCE WAITS UNSCATHED!
COMPLETING THE FORTRESS REPAIRS IS OUR PRIORITY!
DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME, ÉTOILE?
GRRR

NOW THEN, YOUR HIGHNESS...
WHERE DO WE HEAD NEXT?
LET'S SEE... SOUTH WOULD TAKE US TO THE PORT CITY GILAN.
EAST, TO PESHAWAR...
A LONG JOURNEY IT MAY BE—BUT WE RIDE EAST...
KISHWARD, THE GREAT TWIN-BLADE HERO! THE NEXT STAGE OF THEIR STRUGGLE IS THE JOURNEY TO A NEW ALLY!!

WEST IS ALSO AN OPTION. THERE ARE TROOPS STATIONED THERE, MOSTLY INFANTRY, TO PROTECT THE WESTERN BORDER.
MM.
I GAVE IT MUCH THOUGHT OVERNIGHT, AND I BELIEVE OUR BEST COURSE OF ACTION WOULD BE TO ALLY OURSELVES WITH WHAT IS NOW OUR CURRENT STRONGEST MILITARY FORCE, AND WITH A MAN WE KNOW WE CAN TRUST.
...TO MARZBĀN KISHWARD'S POST: PESHAWAR CITADEL!


THE HEROIC LEGEND OF ARSLAN
THIS STORY IS FICTION IT HAS NO CONNECTION TO REAL PEOPLE, GROUPS OR EVENTS

HOW CRUEL OF YOU, LORD VAHRIZ.
WHY WOULD YOU LEAVE A LETTER OF SUCH IMPORT IN THE HANDS OF A MAN AS INCOMPETENT AS I BEFORE THE BATTLE AT ATROPATENE?
COM-MANDING MEN IN BATTLE IS MY ONLY SKILL.
THESE OLD SHOULDERS HAVE NOT THE STRENGTH TO BEAR THIS SECRET ALONE...
PWEEE
!
AZRAEL'S BACK?

LORD BAH-MAN!
A MESSAGE FROM ECBATANA?
...
GOOD NEWS?
I WOULDN'T CALL IT GOOD NEWS, EXACTLY.
...I SEE.
SO BOTH THE KING AND THE CROWN PRINCE'S WHERE-ABOUTS REMAIN UNKNOWN...
ALL WE KNOW FOR CERTAIN IS THAT QUEEN TAHAMENAY STILL LIVES...
...AS A CAPTIVE OF THE LUSITANIAN ARMY. EVERY-THING ELSE IS A MYSTERY.
ABOUT THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND LUSITANIAN TROOPS IN THE ROYAL CAPITAL...
THE PILLAGING MUST BE UNBEAR-ABLE.
YES.
BUT ONCE THE FOOD STORES START TO RUN LOW, THE LUSITANIAN ARMY WILL BE FORCED TO RELOCATE SOME OF THEIR MEN.

WERE WE TO MUSTER EVERY SINGLE ONE OF OUR SOLDIERS, OUR FORCE WOULD NOT NUMBER EVEN ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND.
WE COULD MANAGE ABOUT TWENTY THOUSAND CAVALRYMEN AND SIXTY THOUSAND FOOT SOLDIERS.
REGARDLESS, WE CANNOT LEAVE THE EASTERN BORDER DEFENSELESS...
WE NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT SINDHURA, AT LEAST.
THE CURRENT KING IS BESET WITH ILLNESS. I HEAR THAT THE TWO PRINCES ARE FIGHTING OVER THE SUCCESSION.
TURAN
TÜRK
CONTINENTAL HIGHWAY
PESHAWAR
PARS
SINDHURA
SINDHURA LIKELY WON'T INVADE, BUT WHO'S TO SAY THAT TÜRK AND TŪRĀN WON'T?
WE CAN'T LEAVE OUR POST HERE FOR A WHILE YET, IT SEEMS.
IF WE AT LEAST KNEW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE KING AND THE PRINCE...

DO YOU FEEL UNWELL?
!
NO, NO. IT'S NOTHING.
...
PWEE
SIGH
...OLD MAN BAHMAN HAS BEEN ACTING STRANGE.
AS IF HE'S HIDING SOME-THING...

PWEE!
WHAT DO YOU SAY, AZRAEL?
DOES THE OLD MAN THINK ME STILL TOO WET BEHIND THE EARS TO BE TRUSTWORTHY?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT SMELLS LIKE WHEN YOU FRY A BIRBY IN OIL!?
DO YOU?
DO YOU?
N-NO...
AND THEN I TOSSED THE SQUEALING HERETIC BABY! INTO A CAULDRON OF OIL TO BOIL ALIVE!
I FRIED THE THING UP!

I'D SAY THE CLOSEST THING IS FRIED BEEF!
DIRTY HERETICS! SKIN THEM AND THEIR STENCH IS NO DIFFERENT THAN THAT OF ANIMALS!!
GA
HA HA HA HA
ULP
HA HA HA
THEN I HELD A SWORD TO ITS PARENTS AND MADE THEM EAT IT!
THE MOTHER DIED FROM SHOCK!
THE FATHER WENT MAD AND STRUCK AT ME, SO I CUT HIM INTO RIBBONS!!
SMILE IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU.
COUNT PEDELAUS WOULD KILL YOU JUST FOR LOOKING AT HIM THE WRONG WAY.
HA HA HA HA HA
HE GRABBED AT ME WITH HIS FILTHY HANDS, HE DID...
HIC
... HERE.
SIR PEDELAUS, PLEASE WATCH YOUR FEET!
YASHA SUIIN!
GYA HA HA
DRIBBLE DRIBBLE
OH, NO!
GUH ...
LEMME GO HOME ...
DRIBBLE DRIBBLE
GWAH

SIR PED-ELA-US?!
AGH
WHAT THE ...
!!
LOOK!!!
SHWOOOOM
ぬう
うう゛う
うう

A...
AN ARM?!
WHY YOU ...
ZHMM
ズ
DID YOU GET HIM ?!
TILT
ぐ
WHUMP
どしゃあ

ぎゃあああああ
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!
THERE'S SOME-THING AT HIS FEET!!
AAUUGH
俺の足ィ!!
M-MY LEGS!! MY LEEE
SINK
ああああああ
AAAARGH
A PAGAN DEVIL!!
A MON-STER?!
ひいいいい
AIIIEE
SAVE US, YALDA-BOATH!!
A DISEM-BODIED HAND, WIELDING A BLADE?
TAP
TAP
SOUNDS LIKE A DRUNKEN DELUSION TO ME.
TAP
TAP
GIVEN HOW MANY MEN DESCRIBED THE SAME SIGHT, I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BE SURE OF THAT.
TAP
I'M COMING IN, ELDER BROTHER!
KREE

!
DAMN THAT BODIN. HE BEAT ME HERE?
HE'S A FAST LITTLE BAS-TARD, ALL RIGHT.
I HEARD THE GRAVE NEWS, DUKE GUISCARD.
NOW, NOW. IT'S NOTHING YOUR HOLINESS NEED LIFT A FINGER OVER.
OH, I MUST DISAGREE. OUR LATE BROTHER COUNT PEDELAUS WAS NOT ONLY AN IMPORTANT MEMBER OF COURT, BUT ALSO A BISHOP OF THE CHURCH.
WE MUST HAVE REPARATIONS FOR HIS DEATH. THE LIVES OF TEN THOUSAND INFIDELS, OFFERED UP IN THE NAME OF GOD.

REP-ARA-TIONS?
NO MORE SUGAR WATER?
SIR...
PRE-CISE-LY.
TEN THOU-SAND PAR-SIANS WILL BURN TO DEATH.
IF WE WERE TO DO THAT, IT COULD PROVOKE TEN TIMES AS MUCH HATRED AIMED AT OUR ARMY!!
WILL SOMEONE REFILL MY SUGAR WATER?
SURELY THE FIRST COURSE OF ACTION SHOULD BE TO CAPTURE THE COUNT'S MURDERER AND MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF HIM!
WELL SAID! WE DON'T HAVE THE ENTIRE PARSIAN TERRITORY UNDER CONTROL YET.
BRING ME MY SUGAR WATER...
THE SUR-ROUNDING COUNTRIES WILL INVADE IF WE GIVE THEM AN OPENING.
ONE MILLION HEA-THENS IS NOTHING TO FEAR!!
ONE HOLY WARRIOR UNDER GOD'S DIVINE PROTEC-TION COULD DEFEAT ONE HUNDRED MEN BY HIMSELF!!
I NEED MORE...
NO! THEY MUST BURN!! ALLOWING THESE WICKED INFIDELS TO RUN RAMPANT IS A SLIGHT AGAINST THE HEAVENS!!
WE CANNOT AFFORD TO STIR UP SUCH UNREST WITHIN THE KING-DOM!!
THE ARMIES OF ALL OF THE SUR-ROUNDING COUNTRIES COMBINED COULD EASILY NUMBER ONE MILLION MEN!!
WE ONLY HAVE THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND SOL-DIERS!! WE WOULD BE OVER-RUN!!
ANY-ONE?
SUGAR WATER...
FIGHT YOUR INSANE BATTLE BY YOUR-SELF.
IF, DUKE GUISCARD, SUCH A TIME COMES THAT THE SITUATION GROWS TOO OUT OF HAND FOR YOU...
SUGAR WATER

THE SERVANTS OF GOD STATIONED IN MARYAM...
THE "HOLY KNIGHTS TEMPLAR" COULD BE CALLED FORTH TO JOIN THE CRUSADE...
CA-CLANG
THE TEMPLARS ...
YOU WANT TO SUMMON THEM FROM MARYAM.
IS THAT WHAT YOUR HOLINESS IS PRO-POSING?

...THEY SAY THAT THE TEMPLARS MASSACRED AS MANY AS ONE AND A HALF MILLION PAGANS AND HERETICS IN MARYAM.
AND THAT MORE THAN HALF OF THOSE KILLED WERE WOMEN, CHILDREN, THE ELDERLY, AND THE SICK.
GOD DEMANDED ONE AND A HALF MILLION MARYAM SOULS, AND SO IT WAS THAT GOD'S WILL WAS CARRIED OUT TO FULFILLMENT.
THE ELDERLY AND THE SICK, TOO, COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN HERETIC SOLDIERS THEMSELVES, RESPONSIBLE FOR KILLING VIRTUOUS YALDABOATH BELIEVERS IN THE PAST.
THE FEMALES WOULD ONE DAY GIVE BIRTH.
THE BRATS WOULD ONE DAY GROW TO BE HERETIC SOLDIERS.
DO YOU QUESTION GOD'S PLAN, DUKE GUIS-CARD?

YOU SPEAK OF CARRYING OUT GOD'S WILL, BUT IF THAT'S THE CASE, THERE'S ONE THING THAT DOESN'T SEEM TO MAKE SENSE...
AND WHAT IS THAT?
OH, IT'S BUT A SIMPLE MATTER.
COUNT PEDELAUS, WHO WAS KILLED TONIGHT, WAS A BISHOP OF CONSIDERABLE POWER.
WHY DIDN'T YALDABOATH SAVE SUCH AN ESTEEMED, DEVOUT BELIEVER FROM THE HANDS OF THE EVIL INFIDELS?
ENLIGHTEN ME, ARCH-BISHOP. PLEASE.
"YOU"
...WHAT?
BLASPHEMY!!!
YOU...

PLOO
A MAN OF FLESH SUCH AS I COULD NOT DEIGN TO FULLY COMPREHEND HIS PLAN.
GOD'S WISDOM IS INFINITE.
...EASIER SAID THAN DONE. WHERE AM I TO START?
FIND WHOEVER KILLED COUNT PEDELAUS BEFORE THEY CAN FLEE.
YOU CAN GO, MONTFERRAT.
YES, MY LORD! RIGHT AWAY!
A WHITE ARM, SPROUTING FROM THE GROUND?
!

THE MAN IN THE SILVER MASK...
...
SOMETIMES GOD'S INFINITE WISDOM LEAVES ME COMPLETELY AT A LOSS AS WELL, ELDER BROTHER.
OH YES, DEAR BROTH-ER!
I HAVE SOMETHING MUCH MORE IMPORTANT TO TELL YOU!
OH? WHAT'S THAT?
YOU SEE, YOU SEE... TAHAMENAY CAME TO ME CONCERNING HER HUSBAND, ANDRAGORAS.
DID SHE BEG YOU TO SPARE HIS LIFE?
OH, NO, NO!

SHE SAYS SHE WANTS HIS HEAD...
...FOR IT'S THE ONLY WAY SHE CAN MARRY AGAIN!
NOW THAT SHE'S MEN-TIONED IT, I HAVE TO AGREE!
AS LONG AS *HE* LIVES, TAHAMENAY CAN'T MARRY ANOTHER MAN, OR SHE WOULD BE COMMITTING THE SIN OF POLYGAMY!
SHE'S MADE A GOOD DECI-SION!

AFTER ALL THIS TIME, MY DEVOTION HAS MOVED HER HEART!
WE'RE ONE STEP CLOSER TO THE WEDDING!
SLUMP
DON'T TELL ME...
TAHAMENAY, THAT SHREW.
DID SHE SEE PICK UP ON THE ANTAGONISM IN OUR UPPER RANKS...?
WELL, WELL... SEEMS AS THOUGH SHE'S A SHARP-EYED VIXEN...!!!

THE HEROIC LEGEND OF ARSLAN
MIST APPEARING ON THE PLAINS OF ATROPATENE ON THE DAY OF OUR BATTLE AS IF PLANNED, HANDS SPROUTING FROM THE GROUND AND KILLING PEOPLE...
I HAVE A HUNCH THAT A POWER BEYOND HUMAN UNDER-STANDING IS AT WORK HERE
THERE ARE THE RUMORS THAT PEOPLE WHO USE MAGICS LIVE IN THIS COUNTRY
THAT MAN... HE JOINED OUR FORCES ON THIS CAMPAIGN, SO WHY DOES NO ONE KNOW WHO HE IS OR WHERE HE CAME FROM?

?!
WHERE DID HE GO...!?

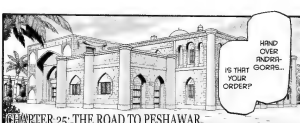
IT SEEMS THERE ARE THOSE WITH KEEN NOSES AMONG THE LUSITANI-ANS.
DO BE CAUTIOUS, LORD SILVER MASK... OH?
WHERE IS YOUR MASK?
THAT'S NONE OF YOUR CON-CERN.
LET ME SEE YOUR MAS-TER.
WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE WITH HIM?
DON'T FEIGN IGNO-RANCE.
YOU USED *EARTH-DIVING MAGIC* TO KILL PETRUS.

DO NOT USE ANY CON-SPICUOUS SORCERY.
I DO NOT RECALL ASKING YOU TO KILL HIM FOR ME.
ZLRR
ZLRR
ZLRR
ZLRR
ZLRR
WE WOULD SEE THE ROYAL CAPITAL FALL FURTHER INTO FEAR AND CHAOS...
IT IS ALL FOR YOUR SAKE.
EVER SINCE THAT DAY, THAT MOMENT...
...WE HAVE BEEN WITH YOU—

FWOOOM
HWOOO
WHY, UNCLE ?!!
AAAH! I'M BURNING !!!
SOME-ONE !!!
AAAAH

HELP !!
FATHER !!
BRING WATER..
AAAARGH
. . . .
WHO ARE YOU

THE HEROIC LEGEND OF ARSLAN



CHAPTER 25: THE ROAD TO PESHAWAR

I AM NOT ORDERING YOU TO DO SO.
ONLY ASKING THAT YOU CONSIDER IT.
YOU PROMISED THAT ANDRAGORAS WOULD BE LEFT IN MY HANDS.
IN RETURN, I ASKED FOR NO OTHER COMPENSATION.
I KNOW! I KNOW!
YOU PREDICTED WHICH DAY THE PLAINS OF ATROPATENE WOULD BE SHROUDED BY FOG, AND WE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN VICTORIOUS IF YOU HAD NOT BROUGHT KHARLAN TO OUR SIDE!
I AM SINCERELY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR HELP!
...BUT TAHAMENAY IS SAYING SHE CAN'T MARRY MY BROTHER UNTIL SHE SEES ANDRAGORAS'S SEVERED HEAD.
SEEING ANDRAGORAS DEAD IS ONE MATTER IN WHICH BOTH MY BROTHER AND BODIN'S INTERESTS LINE UP.
IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT MY BROTHER SEES ANDRAGORAS AS BUT A NUISANCE.

AND THE ARCH-BISHOP?
FORMING AT THE MOUTH, ITCHING TO KILL A HEATHEN KING.
ONCE YOU KILL ANDRA-GORAS, IT'S OVER.
KEEP HIM ALIVE, AND THERE COULD BE COUNTLESS USES FOR HIM.
I AGREE, WHICH IS PRECISELY WHY I LEFT HIM WITH YOU.
MY THOUGHTS ON THAT HAVEN'T CHANGED.
OH, DON'T MIS-UNDER-STAND.
IT IS NOT I YOU MUST CONVINCE, BUT MY BROTHER AND BODIN.
IN THAT CASE ...
IF ANDRAGORAS IS KILLED, KING INNOCENTIS WILL LIKELY MOVE TO MARRY TAHAMENAY.

AND WHEN HE DOES, BODIN WILL GROW EVEN MORE HOSTILE TOWARDS MY BROTHER.
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT TAHAMENAY HERE
SHE MAY VERY WELL WHISPER IN MY BROTHER'S EAR TO THE POINT THAT HE ORDERS BODIN'S EXECUTION.
IF HE MARRIES THAT VIXEN, THE LOYALTY OF YOUR MILITARY LEADERS WOULD INSTANTLY SHIFT FROM THE PRESENT KING TO YOU.
BODIN WOULD SURELY TRY TO STRIP KING INNOCENTIS OF HIS THRONE AS WELL.
AN UNPARAL-LELED IDEAL SITUATION FOR YOURSELF... ISN'T IT...
I WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOUR HIGHNESS TAKE THE THRONE AS WELL, BUT WHERE ANDRAGORAS IS CONCERNED...
NOW, NOW, I'LL NOT FORCE YOU.
I TOLD YOU...
I'M GRATEFUL FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE.

...
THIS SOLDIER SAYS HE HAS AN URGENT MESSAGE FOR THE KING'S BROTHER...
WHAT, HUSRAV?
MAS-TER!! MAS-TER!!
WHAT IS IT?

... THE TEMPLARS ARE ALREADY HERE... ?!
ザッ CLOP
ザッ CLOP
ザッ CLOP
ザッ CLOP
ザッ CLOP
ザッ CLOP
ザッ CLOP
ザッ CLOP

DAMN THAT BODIN ...
HE SENT FOR THEM LONG BEFORE HE THREAT-ENED TO...!!
GRIT
I...
I-I...
I AM...
I AM GOING TO M-MARRY TAHA-MENAY!!
I WILL TAKE HER AS THE NEW EMPRESS OF THE NEW LUSITANIAN EMPIRE!
THEN SHE WILL BEAR ME A CHILD, WHO WILL BE MY SUCCES-SOR!

WHAT A SUR-PRISE ...
TO THINK HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF LUSITANIA, GUARDIAN OF THE FAITH OF YALDA-BAOTH AND ITS BELIEVERS ...
...WOULD UTTER SUCH MADNESS ...
I, HILDIGO, COM-MANDER OF THE HOLY KNIGHTS TEMPLAR...
...AM NOT HERE TO LISTEN TO YOUR JESTING.
TO HAVE YOUR NAME IMMORTALIZED FOR THE FUTURE GENERATIONS AS A HOLY KING, THE VERY EMBODIMENT OF THE GLORY OF YALDABAOTH ON THIS EARTH...
OR TO BURN IN THE FIRES OF HELL AS AN APOSTATE...

AH...
W-
WELL...
THAT
IS...
WHICH
WOULD
YOUR
MAJESTY
CHOOSE?
TCH
SWSSH
RAAA

ドドドド
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
ドド
TH-THUMP
わあ
あああ
RAAAA
ああーあ
ドド
TH-THUMP
ドドドドド
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
SUCH DEEP DEVO-TION
LORD DAR
ドカ
CLOP
!

HOW DID IT LOOK?
BAD.
EVERY ONE OF THE PATHS AHEAD IS SWARMING WITH LUSITANIAN SOLDIERS.
THEY WON'T ALLOW US TO ENTER PESHAWAR SO EASILY, WILL THEY...
SINCE LEAVING HODIR'S FORTRESS, WE'VE BEEN PUSHING OURSELVES ALONG WINDING MOUNTAIN PATHS, AVOIDING OUR ENEMIES...
BOTH WE AND THE HORSES ARE NEARING EXHAUSTION.
?
!

LOOKS LIKE HODIR'S MEN HAVE SET FIRE TO THE MOUNTAIN!
THAT'S NOT GOOD! THE FIRE WILL SPREAD QUICKLY WITH THIS WIND!
WE'VE GOT COMPANY.
LUSITANIAN SOLDIERS.
RRRRMBL
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS.
GO ON AHEAD.
DARYUN!

WE'LL MEET IN PESHA-WAR!!
CLOP

FWOOM
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
KOFF KOFF
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
I CANNOT MAKE ANYTHING OUT IN THIS TERRAIN...
KOFF
C-CLOP
!
RAAAH
INTO THE FOR-EST!!

YOUR HIGH-NESS!
YOUR HIGH-NESS!
YOUR HIGH-NESS!
THE DJINN WHISPER TO RUN THIS WAY!
わあああ
AARR
あああ
AAA
C-CLOP ドカカッ
C-CLOP ドカカッ
C-CLOP ドカカッ

PAH!
BWOOSH
WHOOPS.
GOT SEPARATED...
WHAT NOW, THEN?
DO I HEAD TO PESHAWAR BY MY LONESOME?
KOFF
!
WHOA!
CRING
TH-THUMP
KA-CRINGG
CRING
WHINNY
SOME-ONE'S FIGHTING!
HA!
IT COULD BE LADY FARANGIS! I'D BEST RIDE TO HER RESCUE!
IF IT'S THE MENFOLK? I'LL IGNORE THEM!

CRING
CA-CLANG
KA-CRINGG
RAAAAAA

あぁあわぁ
RAAA
PLAYING NURSE-MAID FOR THE TWO KIDS?
DAMN IT!!
I DREW THE SHORT STRAW!!!
THE HEROIC LEGEND OF ARSLAN
CHAPTER 26: MINSTREL IN THE MOONLIGHT

TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
THOSE ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND GOLD COINS WILL BE MINE!!
NO, THEY'RE MINE!!
YOUR HIGHNESS!!
THNK
HRK...

SLUMP
ぐらぁ
OOF! YOU OAF, WHAT ARE YOU...
BUMP
ドッ
TH-THUMP
ド
TH-THUMP
GEH!
ド
ド
TH-THUMP
ドドッ
TH-THUMP
ドドッ

YOUR LOYAL SERVANT GIEVE HAS COME TO THE RESCUE, ARSLAN, YOUR HIGH-NESS!!
GIEVE!
RIDE THROUGH AND DON'T LOOK BACK, YOUR HIGH-NESS!!
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
STOP, ONE HUN-DRED THOU-SAND GOLD COINS!!
OH REALLY
IF I OFFERED THIS PRINCE TO THE LUSITANIAN ARMY, HE'D FETCH ME ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND GOLD COINS?

FWING
ドカカッ
C-CLOP
ドカカッ
C-CLOP
BUT I WAS BORN A VIRTUOUS FELLOW. I COULD NEVER BE SO DISHONEST AND INHUMAN.
?
ふう
SIGH
SHWFF SHWFF
SHWFF SHWFF

TURN BA—
FIRE!
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP

THUMP
THUMP
THE REWARD IS ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND GOLD COINS FOR HIS HEAD!!
EVEN JUST AN ARM IS WORTH A SMALL FOR-TUNE!!
SHW-BOOSH

RUN !!
SWFF
CLANG
CRING
CLACK
CLACK
CLACK
C-CRINGG
CLANG
CRING
CLANG
CLANG
SWFF
SWFF

!!!
SKREE
SKREE
SKREE
SKRRT
?
WHY HAVE YOU STOPPED? RUN!!
WHAT ARE YOU...

SPLSSHH

RAAAAA
わあああ
HRAH!! WE'LL GIVE THEM WHAT FOR!!!
WHAM
BAM
BAM

AH

HUH ?!
FSSHH
YOU'RE KID DING ME...
CLIMB DOWN AND FIND THEM !!!
WH... ALL THE WAY DOWN THERE?
YOU CAN'T EVEN SEE THE BOT- TOM.
THEY'LL BE DEAD OR DYING! THOSE ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND GOLD COINS ARE JUST WITHIN REACH!
SPLSSH
Y-YES, SIR! ALL RIGHT!
IS THERE A PATH TO THE BOTTOM OF THE CLIFF?!
LET'S GO !!

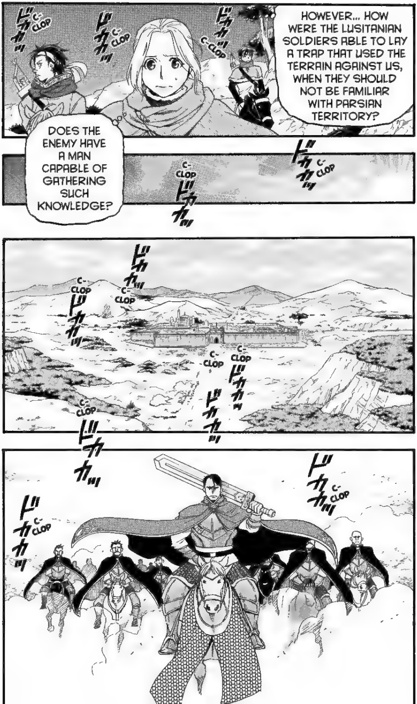
MAYHAPS AT LEAST THE PRINCE'S BODY IS CAUGHT ON THE CLIFF FACE...
A RIVER AT THE BOTTOM?
I HOPE THEY HAVEN'T BEEN SWEPT AWAY...
FSSH
BROOH
ZGOOSH
URK

WHO EVER SAID WE HAD TO FALL ALL THE WAY TO THE BOTTOM?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING ?!
LEAVE THE BAGS! WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE QUICKLY!
THESE ARE PRECIOUS PIECES OF PARSIAN CULTURE! IT IS MY DUTY TO PROTECT THEM!

AH!
THEY'RE ALIVE !!
OVER HERE !!
KILL THEEEM!
HAVE WE LOST THEM?
I OWE YOU MY LIFE, GIEVE.
HOW SHALL I REPAY YOU?
ME?

I CANNOT SAY I DESIRE EITHER TITLE OR POSITION.
I'LL NEED TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT.
AND YOU, ELAM?
I DO NOT NEED A REWARD EITHER.
THINK NOTHING OF IT.
WHAT DO YOU WISH TO BE WHEN YOU ARE OLDER, THEN?
SIR NARSUS WILL CHOOSE THAT.
AT ANY RATE, I PLAN ON STUDYING UNDER SIR NARSUS UNTIL I AM A GROWN MAN!
GO! GO!
!!

THEY'RE A STUBBORN LOT!
THIS WAY, YOUR HIGHNESS!
SEEMS THEY WON'T LET US THROUGH TO PESHAWAR CITADEL SO EASILY.
THEN ALL THE MORE REASON TO PUSH ON.
IF THEY GIVE CHASE SO RELENTLESSLY, IT MEANS THEY DO NOT WANT TO LET US INTO PESHAWAR.
I'M CONVINCED! PESHAWAR HAS NOT FALLEN INTO ENEMY HANDS!
WELL, WELL...
I AM CONCERNED FOR SIR NARSUS AND THE OTHERS AS WELL!
WE MUST HURRY THROUGH THESE MOUNTAINS!
INDEED!! I WORRY FOR LADY FARANGIS!! LET US MAKE HASTE!!



HOWEVER... HOW WERE THE LUSITANIAN SOLDIERS ABLE TO LAY A TRAP THAT USED THE TERRAIN AGAINST US, WHEN THEY SHOULD NOT BE FAMILIAR WITH PARSIAN TERRITORY?
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
DOES THE ENEMY HAVE A MAN CAPABLE OF GATHERING SUCH KNOWLEDGE?
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP

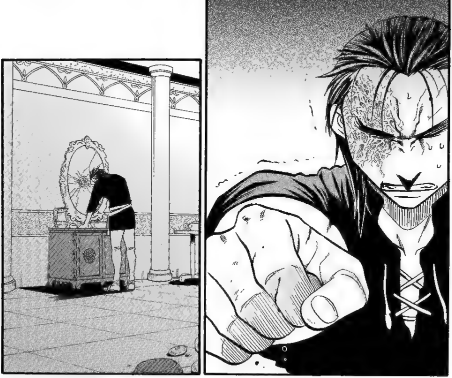
C-CLOP
ドカカッ
C-CLOP
ドカカッ
C-CLOP
ドカカッ
ドカカッ
C-CLOP
!
ドカカッ
C-CLOP
STOP RIGHT THERE!!
C-CLOP
ドカカッ
C-CLOP
ドカカッ
C-CLOP
YOU THERE, ON THE HORSES! HALT!!
GET DOWN FROM...
SMACK
BUH

!
A PASS FROM DUKE GUISCARD!
SIR, ERM...
P-PLEASE PARDON OUR INSOLENCE!
I AM ZAND, SON OF ĒRAN KHARLAN!
OUT OF MY WAY!!

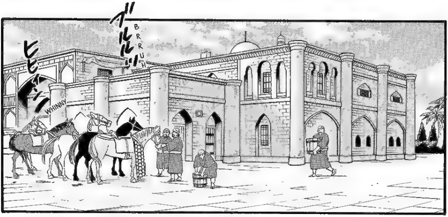
...
EXCUSE M...
... EEK ...!
!!
CLUNK
CLATTER

AH!
WHY DO YOU TREMBLE?
...AM I THAT REVOLTING?
I-I'M TERRIBLY SORRY!
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY!
I WILL CLEAN THIS UP RIGHT AWAY! PLEASE, MASTER, FORGIVE ME, I BEG YOU!!
IS THIS FACE THAT REVOLTING?

LEAVE IT.
YOU MAY CLEAN IT UP AFTER I'VE LEFT.
Y-YES, MAS-TER!!
KRNCH
KRINK



THE HEROIC LEGEND OF ARSLAN



CHAPTER 27: SON OF KHARLAN

IT IS AN HONOR TO KNEEL BEFORE YOUR HIGHNESS FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME!
I HAVE JOURNEYED HERE FROM OUR FAMILY LANDS TO OFFER MYSELF IN SERVITUDE TO YOUR HIGHNESS HERMES, IN MY LATE FATHER'S STEAD!
I AM ZAND, SON OF KHARLAN!
I SEE.
SO YOU ARE KHAR-LAN'S SON...!

I AM GOING TO DRIVE ANDRAGORAS OUT OF PARS, WIPE OUT THE LUSITANIAN SAVAGES, AND RECLAIM MY RIGHTFUL PLACE ON THE THRONE.
I HAD INTENDED TO APPOINT YOUR FATHER AS MY *ERĀN*, THE COMMANDER OF THE ENTIRE ARMY OF PARS.
NOW THAT KHARLAN IS DEAD, I WOULD BESTOW THIS ROLE UPON YOU.
IT WOULD BE MY HUMBLE PLEASURE!
I AM SURE THIS BRINGS MUCH JOY TO MY FATHER IN THE AFTERLIFE AS WELL!
I, ZAND...
...SWEAR TO BRING YOUR HIGHNESS THE HEADS OF THE TRAITORS ARSLAN, DARYUN, AND NARSUS!!
EXCELLENT.
BUT DO NOT ADDRESS ME AS "YOUR HIGHNESS."
MY LINEAGE IS STILL A SECRET IN THIS PLACE.
YES, MILORD! PARDON MY FOOLISHNESS!

AH, YES.
YOU NAMED THE ONE KNOWN AS NARSUS.
WHO IS HE?
WHEN THE THREE-KINGDOM ALLIANCE OF TŪRĀN, TŪRK, AND SINDHURA ATTACKED FROM THE EAST...
...HE WAS THE TACTICIAN WHO DROVE AWAY 500,000 ENEMY TROOPS WITH JUST ONE ORDER.
WITH JUST ONE ORDER...
DARYUN AND NARSUS...
CLENCH
WHY IS IT THAT THE BUMBLING BRAT HAS SUCH TALENT GATHERED UNDER HIS COMMAND...!!
WHY IS IT THAT THE BUMBLING BRAT HAS SUCH TALENT GATHERED UNDER HIS COMMAND...!!
...I HAD ORDERED YOUR FATHER TO FIND ARSLAN, BUT HIS UNTIMELY DEATH LEFT THE TASK UNFINISHED.
HE WAS ABLE TO TRACK THE BRAT AS FAR AS THE THE MOUNTAINS OF DAYLAM IN THE NORTH BEFORE HE WAS KILLED.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS AS TO WHERE THEY MAY BE HIDING?
I AM PLEASED TO SAY THAT I DO HAVE INFORMATION REGARDING THEIR WHERE-ABOUTS!
FIRST, THEY TURNED SOUTH.
ROLL
SOUTH... TO THE PORTS OF GILAN?
NO.
TO KASHAN FOR-TRESS, HODIR'S KEEP.
HODIR!
DAMN THAT ARSLAN. HE ASKED HODIR FOR AN ALLIANCE?
NOT SO, IT SEEMS.
WHAT?
I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT HODIR ATTEMPTED TO KILL DARYUN AND NARSUS, IN ORDER TO SECURE HIMSELF A PLACE AS ARSLAN'S BENEFACTOR, BUT HIS SCHEME LED TO HIS OWN DEMISE.
HMPH.
HE DIED AS HE LIVED, THEN.

I REMEMBER KNOWING THAT HE WAS A MAN OF DEEP GREED WHO KNEW NOT HIS PLACE, AS A CHILD.
PRECISELY, MILORD!
MY FATHER, TOO, NEVER SPOKE WELL OF HODIR.
AFTER KILLING HODIR, ARSLAN'S GROUP LEFT KASHAN AND REPORTEDLY TRAVELED EAST.
ARE THEY HEADING FOR PESHAWAR?
IN ALL LIKELIHOOD!
BUT NOT ONLY ARE THE LUSITANIANS CHASING THEM, SO ARE HODIR'S MEN. IT SEEMS THEY'VE BEEN FORCED TO TAKE LARGE DETOURS.
GATHERING INFORMATION SEEMS TO BE A STRONG SUIT OF YOURS.
THANK YOU!
YOU HONOR ME, HERMES, YOUR HIGHNESS!
I TOLD YOU NOT TO CALL ME "YOUR HIGHNESS."
U-UNDERSTOOD!
I BEG YOUR PARDON!

...WHAT SHOULD I CALL, ERR... Y-YOUR HIGHNESS?
"LORD SILVER MASK" WILL DO.
AN ASININE NAME, BUT THE ONLY ONE I CAN USE AS OF NOW.
AS YOU WISH, LORD SILVER MASK!
I AM TRULY HONORED THAT YOU WOULD DEEM MY INTELLIGENCE NETWORK WORTHY OF PRAISE!
I SENT THOSE AMONG MY MEN WHO ARE THE MOST FAMILIAR WITH PARSIAN TERRAIN TO INSTRUCT THE LUSITANIAN TROOPS.
THEY ARE CONSTANTLY SENDING ME INFORMATION BY RIDERS AND BIRDS.

AT PRESENT, ARSLAN AND HIS BAND ARE MOST LIKELY IN THE MOUNTAINS, SIXTY FARSANGS FROM PESHAWAR!
WE ARE GOING HUNTING, ZAND.
LET US CAPTURE ANDRAG-ORAS' BASTARD.
YES, MY LORD!

YOU WILL NOT MEET A QUICK DEATH WHEN I'VE CAPTURED YOU, ARSLAN.
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
C-CLOP
FIRST, I'LL BURN HALF OF YOUR FACE.
ONLY AFTER THAT WILL I KILL YOU.
PERHAPS I'LL STAND YOU UP NEXT TO ANDRAG-ORAS AND LOP BOTH OF YOUR HEADS OFF.
PERHAPS I'LL GIVE YOU SWORDS AND FORCE YOU TO FIGHT EACH OTHER TO THE DEATH...
OR PERHAPS ...

TH-TH-THUMP
TH-TH-THUMP
TH-TH-THUMP
TH-TH-THUMP
THEY STILL HAVEN'T GIVEN UP?!
TH-TH-THUMP
TH-TH-THUMP
TH-TH-THUMP
ELAM! FELL SOME OF THOSE HORSES FOR US!!
I'M OUT OF ARROWS!!
YOU TOO?!
WELL THEN, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO OUTRUN THEM!!
TH-TH-THUMP
BRRH ぶほっ
TH-TH-THUMP
BRRH ぶほっ
BRRH ぶほっ

YES !!
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
CREE
WHINNY
THNK
THUD

HA !!!
GOT ONE!!
!!
TCH!
SKRP
ELAM !!
C-CLOP

AN IMPORTANT SUBORDINATE WOULD BE ONE THING, BUT FOR HIM TO TURN BACK TO SAVE A MERE PAGE...
I THOUGHT THAT THOSE IN HIGH PLACES TOOK THOSE BELOW FOR GRANTED...
...WELL, I'LL BE DAMN-ED.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, YOUR HIGH-NESS?!
STAND, ELAM! HURRY!
HE'S RAV-ING MAD!
TH-TH-THUMP
TH-TH-THUMP
TH-TH-THUMP
PLEASE LEAVE ME AND RUN!!

TH-TH-THUMP
TH-TH-THUMP
TH-TH-THUMP
SLICE
GUWAH!
GIEVE!!

FORWARD, LANCERS!!
じり
SKRRT
じり
SKRRT
WE'LL SPLIT THE ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND GOLD COINS UP AMONGST US...!!

TWIRL
GRIP
?!
LEAP
THNK
RRRIP

WOOSH
OHHHH!!
IT'S ALL MINE!!
MOVE IT!!
FIGHT THEM, YOU FOOLS!!
GREEDY PIGS...
AH...!

YOU'VE COST ME DEARLY, YOU BASTARD !!!
SPLOORSH
HE KILLED THE CAPTAIN !!!
UWAAAA
あぁあぁ
YAARGH!!!

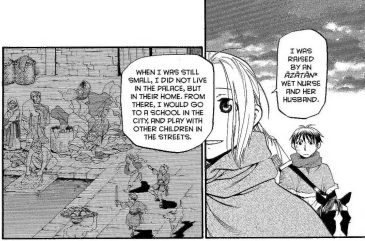
YOUR QUICK WITS HAVE SAVED US AGAIN, GIEVE.
YOU HAVE MY THANKS.
YOU'RE WEL-COME.
PLEASE LET ME GO, YOUR HIGH-NESS.
I CAN WALK ON MY OWN.
PUSH
CAN YOU RIDE, ELAM?
I TOOK A HARD FALL, THAT'S ALL.
I CAN KEEP GOING.
...
...DO YOU WISH TO SAY SOME-THING?

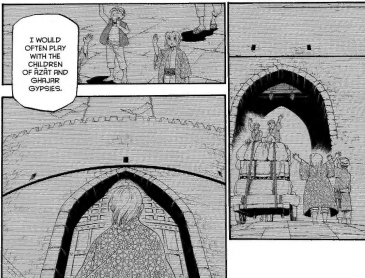
DO YOU HATE ME, ELAM?
...WHY WOULD YOU ASK SUCH A THING?
I WISH TO BECOME FRIENDS WITH YOU.
SO LONG AS YOU DO NOT HATE YOU, WILL YOU BE MY FRIEND?

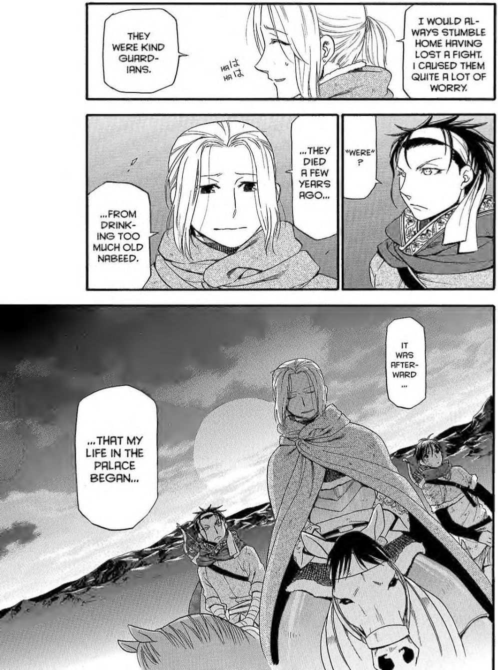
FRIENDS, WITH YOUR HIGHNESS?
OUR STATIONS IN LIFE ARE FAR TOO DIFFERENT FOR US TO BE FRIENDS.
BY THAT REASONING, I WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO HAVE A SINGLE FRIEND!
...I AM THE SON OF FORMER SLAVES.
IN ANY CASE, I AM GRATEFUL TO YOUR HIGHNESS FOR SAVING ME.
I WILL REPAY THIS KINDNESS, I SWEAR IT.
THERE IS NO NEED.
I WAS ALSO RESCUED, MYSELF.

THANK GOOD-NESS.
WE CAN REPLEN-ISH OUR SUPPLY OF ARROWS.
WELL, WELL. THAT'S A NICE SWORD YOU HAVE THERE.
MINE HAS GOTTEN RATHER WORSE FOR THE WEAR. DON'T SUP-POSE YOU'LL MIND IF I HELP MYSELF!
YOUR HIGH-NESS'S BLADE SEEMS TO BE IN A DREADFUL STATE.
IT IS AN ENEMY SWORD, BUT PLEASE, TAKE THIS.
I COULDN'T. NOT WHEN YOUR OWN SWORD IS JUST AS NICKED AND WORN.
KEEP IT FOR YOUR-SELF.
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO PROTECT A SINGLE FRIEND WITH A BLADE LIKE THAT, YOU KNOW.

YOU'RE RIGHT. THANK YOU.
I'LL TAKE IT.
IF I MAY, YOUR HIGHNESS, WHEN YOU WERE SMALL, WERE YOU PERHAPS RAISED OUT-SIDE OF THE PALACE?
WHY DO YOU ASK?
JUST A HUNCH.
AM I WRONG?
NO, YOUR GUESS IS COR-RECT.
I'VE SPENT MUCH MORE OF MY LIFE OUTSIDE OF THE PALACE THAN INSIDE.


I WAS RAISED BY AN AZATAN* WET NURSE AND HER HUSBAND.
WHEN I WAS STILL SMALL, I DID NOT LIVE IN THE PALACE, BUT IN THEIR HOME. FROM THERE, I WOULD GO TO A SCHOOL IN THE CITY, AND PLAY WITH OTHER CHILDREN IN THE STREETS.
*AZATAN = KNIGHTLY CASTE


I WOULD OFTEN PLAY WITH THE CHILDREN OF AZAT AND GHULAM GYPSIES.


I WOULD ALWAYS STUMBLE HOME HAVING LOST A FIGHT. I CAUSED THEM QUITE A LOT OF WORRY.
HA は HA は
THEY WERE KIND GUARDIANS.
"WERE"?
...THEY DIED A FEW YEARS AGO...
...FROM DRINKING TOO MUCH OLD NABEED.
IT WAS AFTERWARD...
...THAT MY LIFE IN THE PALACE BEGAN...